

OH AMSTERDAMMERS! OH AMSTERDAMMERS!

by Lee Bridges

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ISBN 1-57106-223-8 (electronic book BOD)
OH AMSTERDAMMERS! OH AMSTERDAMMERS!

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HMS Press Books on Disk

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ISBN: 90-90009817-8(paper)

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

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OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

Acknowledgements

Poems previously published included in manuscript:

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THE RHYTM MAN

THE BLUES BIRD SINGS

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(a)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

what unhardened look and steady eye
voices thundering with honesty
handshakes warm as charcoal fire
why you're really brotherly

But stop
right now
before you slap my back
and grin
because I swear by all the
ghouls of hades
your manners
are as bad as sin

A DUTCH BEAT

He slid outside of the
smoking coffee shop
Uttering & giggling
Before modulating into
AAAAaaaaaaaooooeeeeeeeee
With the glass facade
Behind him reflecting
Street smark smiles of
Many improvising on
The very same melody

IT IS IF IT AIN'T

Folks come from everywhere
To Amsterdam, to see, to hear
And to find out if it's really
True what others say about the
Excitement of just strolling
Through the good time district
Looking at all the pretty young
Things of every nationality
Beckoning from behind rouge
Glass facades, and visit one of
The numerous sex shops where
All kinds of paraphernalia and
Erotic films are on naked
Display, and you can drop into
One of the many cafes and bars
Lesbian, homo, or straight and
Have a drink of some of the
Famous Dutch Beer, or visit

2. IT IS IF IT AIN'T

One of the much heralded
' getting high coffe shops '
WWWWHHHHhhooooooooooooeee, again
And the only policemen you ever
See are the unusually young
Looking and quite unperturbed
Men and women in blues two-toned
Uniforms and, no wonder when
You get back home you can tell
Everybody what a good time you
Had, that is, when you are
Feeling pretty certain you
Ain't caught nothing and you
Ain't become addicted
To anything

IN THE 'DAM

A tourist boat mourns as it
Creeps along in the midst of
Amsterdam's overcasting acid
Rains coating grim grey canals
With passengers eyeing towards
Red lighting headstones lining
Grave cobbled streets in search
Of manifestations of pleasure &
Excitement with eagerness since
Earlier having to witness an
Eerie video-playback-like drama
Of a lone junky looking dude
Bobbing & weaving on foul water
Drenched doorsteps making folks
Wonder man how could you get
Yourself hung up into something
That you can't get out of but
He'd kept right on looking as

Though he didn't really care if
Any one day was any different
From any other

THE DOPPELGANGERS

(a)

Sprung -out into the wilderness
Frosty figures form glacial
Apparitions
Without sight
Without touch
Without taste
Without smell
Without hearing
So uncompromising the dragon
The chase is always
A beginning without an end

2. THE DOPPELGANGERS

(b)

Of spacecrafts farting over a
Universe where deals are made
Along any city street even in
The daytime with guaranteed
Ways of entering heaven or
Get your money back

(c)

Or just keep on going until
The final sun is set
Within sight
Within touch
Within taste
Within smell
Within hearing
And the pursuit has ended
Finally the beast is dead

DERELICTION

Of course he was a nobody folks could see it
For a fact
Shoes running down in need of heels and, the
Band was off his hat
Patched old clothes all crumpling in wrinkles
Hanging loose like a dirty sheet
And he sure 'nough looks mighty thin, like
He could use a bite to eat
But something else about that man, nary a soul
Could quite deny
The face was reminiscent of, a dark past human
Kind decry
And when he wanders into view, heads turn as
Though he makes them sick
Indeed, it's not difficult determining just
Who is derelict

BIG MAMA

We all know the
Good time ladies
So businesslike in
Promiscuity

And, we all know
It is often chance
Which enhance many
A soul in society

Indeed, we have all
Witnessed the sudden
Outburst of feminine
Fury

Feelings, sometimes
Icebergs, sometimes
Feelings blue

And, we all know
Just how great is
A mother's love and
What it will make
Any mama do

DESTINY DESPISED

Dark evenings
White rooms glaring
Chandeliers antediluvian
Mosaics of splendor
Iniquitous
Old mother cosmeticswhore
Perishing in oceans of
Sullenness and despair
Forevermore
Soft spring skies
Brown maidens lifting
Short skirts over the
Moon though they too
Shall grow old and
Die
Perhaps gracefully

MODUS OPERANDI

Crying
A million peoples
Crying
Honey blues
On life's twisting avenues
Paying dues
Crying
A million peoples
Have never seen a man
Crying
With tears flowing from his eyes
Have never seen a woman
Crying
With tears flowing from her eyes
A million peoples
Crying

SSSHHHHHhheeeee !

Indeed, it is not always
Entirely discouraging to
Learn of the unrelieving
Problems of others while
Having to deal, each day
With one's own emotional
And, anti-social hangups

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(b)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

strolling along a tree-lined street
or water centered you call gracht
makes no difference who I am
at almost any huis (house)

I stop
I'm welcome to share what you've
got
inside you do the most
to make me happy and at ease
but names remain anonymous
ignorant I take my leave

VERNISSAGE

Rappers raging in riffs
Virgins mas caraed hags stags
Strutting through smoke-air
Commemorating old masters
Mellifluous in immortality
Every contrariety brags
Flaunting ego-centered
Comparisons to some Vincent
Van Gogh or E.A. Poe or
Bessie Smith although most
Voices tend to zigzag
Resembling cracked ridges
On worn discs

SYMPHONY

Did you ever hear
The saxman playing along with the
Trumpetman in unison while the
Pianoman is caressing ivories
Blending in with the baseman and
The drummerman and all that
Rhythm

Real classic
All that jazz

Like painters ans poets and
Laughter and fried chicken and
A blue note

RHYTM & BLUES

It was raining in Amsterdam
The man was glad to be inside the
Tram altho it was crowded and the
Melange of fashionable and cheap
Perfumes made the air almost
Unbreathable

He looked towards the window, and
Out, through dirt streaking refuse
And, he saw, and, he heard and, he
Could hardly believe..... what?

How weird to see someone standing
Bareheaded, playing a saxophone to
The beat of pitter-patter pelting
Upon an old bowler hat placed with
Meticulousness on the gleaming
Sidewalk before him

2. RHYTHM & BLUES

He listened, and he felt pretty
Certain many others had, indeed
Experienced variations on the
Theme of that most distressing
Musical piece

OP de MARKT

(In The Market Place)

Scrawling tufts glisten
In early morning dew an urchin's
Brown bare feet pitter-patter
Cold cobblestones in Amsterdam's
Open market place with chilling
Hands clutching a king's ransom
To a frail ragged chest heaving
In flight to lofty younger worlds
Far beyond the roar of
Imprecations as a thousand arms
Reach out of antiquity in
Established order even while
Trembling fingers drip with
Putrefaction from
Overripe bananas

INTO THE WILDERNESS

" Damn...." groans the ageing well
Dressed man standing alone in scary
Approximation of an unsocializing and
Diminishing populace on the platform
Of a grimy Amsterdam metro station
Glowering towards the derelict junkie
Looking dude waltzing in his direction
Extending contaminated bone ash hands
Suplicating in concert with discordant
Intonations " Sir can you spare a few
Gulden please " to which the reply is
Curt and cold as Cain " Man you better
Get on way from me I ain't got nothing
For you " in dark overtones of a once
Powerful & indeed arrogant youthfulness
Which causes the supplicant to detour

2. INTO THE WILDERNESS

Accelerating with pledges crutching
Over shoulders slump " ' scuse me
Brother but someday I'm gonna get all
Clean too... with God's help " And the
First man began to feel uncomfortable
Although he kept telling himself that
Since the very beginning we had all
Been cast out into the wilderness

WATCH OUT !

Dissension !
See how they charge ?

The choral brigades
Singing the same old
Song

Restraints, repeats
Inharmonics
Notes wrong

In every dimension
Differences belied
Disintegrations
Harsh, warlike
Confrontations
All reason denied
On both clean and
Mean streets

Attention !
Inflating egos at
Large

A MELANCHOLIC SONG

Parched bloody lips
Despising Adam as all of the
Cacophonies of humankind grapple
Throngs everywhere dawns dignify
Despondency so long as love lies
In deceit with the international
Soul singers continuing in agony
To intone although few heed the
Supplications of that melancholic
Song with all of its ailments of
Irrepressible despair as misery
Keeps intruding and discordance
Is prolonged

SUB-TONES

Hear them.....

Shaking

Trembling

thoughts

without care
imprisoned minds
crying out in
despair

....though many are those
pretending not to
stand very

Near them...

Raking

Dismembering

friends

dear

2. SUB-TONES

and foe alike
indiscriminately
what aminvidious
carreer

undignified yet dark roles
in life easily
find those who

Fill them...

Faking

Resembling

saints

christians
struttung very
distinctly om
God's missions

and when they begin to sing
their battle
songs they
always shout

Dear Him

Making

Assembling
demons
instead
smiling undertakers
glad when that
rascals dead
really too often fellowmen
give very little
encouragement to

3. SUB-TONES

Cheer them....

Shaking
Trembling
Raking
Dismembering
Faking
Assembling

Dear God...
... many fear them.

FLYING HIGH

Darkening brows decry
The wonders of light while
Moments held dear become
Immersed in fear although
Increasing mass-media hype
Certainly makes it quite
Clear every future is
Bright unless you're flying
Way up too high and acting
All uptight

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(c)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !
champions of drinking & smoking cafes
comrades in hashish weed and cognac
laughter rings out clean and gay
but damn it learn how to act
of course
I know
you don't mean any harm
but sides are still aching
from your elbows and arms
Lord I hope it isn't so
but I bet your foot
has broken many a toe

THINKING OUT LOUD

In the calm sunny morning
A soft melodizing magic of an
Alto saxophone coruscating to
Deep subtle strains of violins
Makes you wonder why can't it
Be like this always instead of
Having to think about the rent
Man and the butcher man & the
Bread man the tax man too and
The pretty young chick showing
Off titillating thighs sitting
Up high behind the counter in
The coffee shop where you can
Cop all kinds of good smoke in
Surprising Amsterdam Good Lord

2. THINKING OUT LOUD

You got to get to work and
Stop getting stoned & hung-up
Over all the bills you have to
Pay the car note too & a final
Installment on the fancy video
Camera you had bought for the
Big butt woman who didn't care
That much about you anyway you
Would rather be with a classic
Hot little lady like the space
Selling mama in the head house
Where last evening you almost
Blew your cool & threw a punch
At the shifty looking dude who
Stood lusting in her direction
Disgusting indeed you rememeber

Your coat needs repairing
Also the television set of
Which you do not bother trying
To switch on preferring sounds
Of the stereo rising up beyond
The discords of violence & the
Lamentations of souls striving
To exist in a harsh world into
Which you step out wide awake
To the trying obstreperous
Rhythms of a brand new
Every day

MONKEY BUSINESS

He didn't want to hear about
Folks telling one another just how
Bad things are
Growing criminal environments
Sexual harassments, terrorism
Racism, military confrontations
And the ever failing peace
Conferences and, on and on and.....

And he certainly did not care to
Talk about
The disgusting assortment of
Drug addicts, the alcoholism
The young prostitutes, or even
The homeless... all losers, the
List goes on and on unending...

2. MONKEY BUSINESS

In fact, he didn't even see
The light and, apparently
The bus driver did not
Immediately become aware of
His presense, either
Crossing illegally over the
Busy city street
He never knew, and he had not
Been smoking either

SONG & DANCE

He kept telling himself that
He was going to stop smoking &
He was going to stop drinking
And using drugs & chasing after
Women and hanging out all night
And hardly ever seeing the sun
Lighting up the sky and indeed
He was going to get himself real
Together and stop worrying all
The time over money too although
He was beginning to feel more &
More uneasy to eerie resoundings
Of artful procrastinations dark
Haunting monotones in disharmony

RED LIGHT, GO GREEN

Cheerful, laid back, spirits brighter than
Autumn rays of gold, then suddenly, one is
Alone, unloved, cast off without hope into
Some social stranglehold, an ungodly abyss

So foul, so stealthy and, so outrageous is
Life's awful turn of fate, a fool is often
Found in favor, however, none pass through
Saint Peter's gate, so severe a Judas Kiss

Grim echoing rhyme of mockery and distrust
Has damn near got the best of us, ensnared
In the thrust of those racing for parttime
Salvation, fulfillment is a self sell myth

Still the most adverse souls in reluctance
Confess, a sad, melancholic song continues
Nonetheless, refrains by infinite millions
Ever struggling in a solemn quest to exist

A WEIRD MELODY

Slam ! Bam ! Wham !

The band plays

deliriously
bulls belles
butting heads
chests bracing
together like

Lovers

from a distance
but not lovers

Folks

pushing preying
human souls

Trampling over each other

Trying to get further

ignorance pride
and prejudice

Mmmmmmmmaaaaaaaaaa.....swish !

Cows being led to the slaughter
house.

2. A WEIRD MELODY

Good day

Mr. Jones Filet

Bonjour

Monsieur Rosbif

Sadly

Some skulls encase
vast areas of emptiness
unexplored
dark grey yonder worlds
what grief !

Why it just ain't rhythmic

standing toe to toe
high class animals
double barrelled foe
locked in mortal combat
each afraid to let the
other go
at last a deep breath
of fatigue
a sigh
of death ?

Death !Death ! Death !

Of civilization perhaps

everyday
the headlines show
people trying to make
it that way
farcial folk, you know
like old virgins
contributing even
less to humanity
than a whore
...getting less also

3.A WEIRD MELODY

No more ! No more ! No more !
Now ain't what's playing
out of key
It ain't got no harmony
No wonder it's such a weird
melody

SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

Certainly it's true
The streets are cold

And deep in that sordid pit voices despising
One the other lose all hope of ever
Climbing out of it

And if you ain't got no gold
And dull of wit

The only thing left to lift yourself from that
Hidious place of woe is that experience teaches
It's even colder down below

Every dawn is grey
Each soul is blue
Melancholy's song modulates into all the
Sorrows of humankind where hearts in
Cheerlessness submit

2. SOMETHING TO HOLD ON TO

And fleeing moments evanesce into some
Indefinable dimension like feelings
When we pray

Wondering if we're getting through

Especially since most folks realize that in
Neglecting the very thing of which we should
Give our most devoted attention

Love, blessedness true invention, destroys all
When we fail to let it flow

Attention !

Careful, we warn ourselves not to fall in
With that crew
Losing, lost it all, dying leaves in autumn
Knowing what is coming, knowing what is due

One has to hold a vision of a warm, caressing
Sky where the sun is ever glowing and
Stars are twinkles in the eye

A dream unfit ?

Perhaps, when finally one reaches that long
Sought safety of a shore

But as the rhythm man says, if you don't want
To end up in the zoo

You better get something brother, something
To hold on to.

TRAVELLERS, ROADS TWIST

Once they saw the same star
What brilliance
 Love, gaiety and wit
 In eternal bliss
 Spring waters spurting
 Like some virgin
 Maids of gold
How bright the dawn
When hearts unfold

2. TRAVELLERS, ROADS TWIST

Once they heard the same voice
Sad dissonance
 Drab, dreary and unfit
 Mourns of what is missed
 And of how hard it is
 To come in from
 The cold
The weeper's song
Of souls being sold

And don't you know they never get paid
Just look at the way most folk get laid
Into holes in the floor where they 've
 Prayed and prayed
Signing over this and crying over that
While taking life as a matter of fact
And of holes in the floor where they 've
 Prayed and prayed

Once they touched the same women
Discontinuance
 Indeed, the truth of it

So few can resist
A whore's naked thigh
A mother's sweet
Endearing kiss
The tale never grows old but
Travellers, roads twist

GUESS WHAT
'thereby hangs a tale'

Ruffled brows seek visions in the dust
Is that the highest plateau of a dream
While souls weep in agony's sad thrust
Most whom have as yet gone past a teen

How supreme tradition's shackles bound
Damning futures to some beguiling past
Where glory's shielding light is found
Above the shroud of an aggrieving mass

Far a way up yonder on top of the hill
In lanes of gold on silver laces peaks
To that end of beyond is further still
Not often traversed by the poor & meek

2. GUESS WHAT
'thereby hangs a tale'

Tho' none doubt it can enrich the till
Where humankind solely that all to seek
But wealth alone's unlikely to fulfill
A heart secure with happiness complete

While believing in richness to survive
A peoples reliance in land and in self
Paradoxically it seems as if to divide
Leaving all in wonder of what is next

IT'S HAPPENING

Indeed, what a universe of
Wonder, superstars spiraling
To-and-fro

Satellites once cringing and
Mourning, are now exclaiming"
"Gimme more !"

And whole households gather
To look forward, unintimidated
By what they will hear and see

A myriad of worlds, damned in
Discontent, coarse, street
Smarts sophistry

Certainly, occasions are very
Much in evidence, where human
Trials are quickly put aside

The atmosphere becomes more
Exciting, simply perusing the
T.V. Guide

EXACTLY, MAN

He knew, alright, exactly what
The folks thought of him...

...the butcher man, the cigarette
Man, the old woman at the newsstand
The liquor store man, the bookie
Man, and the madam who ran the good
Time house...

...yeah, he knew, alright, exactly
What they, and all the others,
Thought of him along the streets of
His neighborhood

But, what he did not know, however
Was, what exactly did he think of
Himself ?

BUSINESS AS USUAL

One awakes, and looks out
Over the dawn...

... feelings good, for a
Little while before
Remembering that it's just
Another day to be overcome.

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(d)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

one more thing and I'll give this up

why in the hell do you always

put sugar in my tea and

coffee cup

and this is the first time

that I have ever seen

bread offered

saturated

with butter and

margarine

and when I take the tram

slam bam

... damn

A FAMILY HOLIDAY

Ladies and gentlemen
Fasten your seatbelts,please.....

Aw,man...

...it was real exciting you and
Your mother sitting side by side
Occupying first class seats while
Cruising all the way from the Big
Apple to surprising Amsterdam
Where everything is cool in the
Late evening when you're strolling
Along wine colored canals in the
Good time district and you can
Look over towards narrow streets
And see pretty young big butt
Chicks sitting high way up on red
Cushioned stools in cosmetic
Interiors creating a most luscious
Invite and ever so often you could
Catch sight of one of the smoking
Coffee shops & one of each of the

2. A FAMILY HOLIDAY

Establishments you visit before
The night is over all the time
Thinking man man what a trip !

And in the morning you wake up
Still feeling good and thinking
The same thing before remembering
My God... I forgot about mama !

WWWHHHOOOooooeee !

WWWHHHOOOooooeee !
Again

WHEW !

A very fine morning, indeed...
... no television, no radio
No newspapers...

... no telephone calls, no post
No pressing bills to pay

No one, certainly no one to
Speak with while strolling thru
An isle of green amid a soul
Darkened sea.

No wonder, looking upwards at
Last, we're often shocked to
find the sky, is still in place

STRUNG-OUT

Many a road we have travelled
Meeting a lot of people and
Doing a lot of things.....

Good times...
... bad times...
... and, just plain old times
Like those periods passing so
Rapidly until you don't
Remember anything other than
It was nineteen hundred or
Something...

2. STRUNG-OUT

And ain't it the truth...
...In all of those years
There was always somebody
Somewhere, no matter how hard
It was to ask, there was always
Somebody
A last hand
A saving grace
Those who understood, everything

But all the same
There comes another time when
There is nobody
Nothing
Nothing at all, except some
Dealer lurking with impatience
Against the wall of some
Dead end street

HUNG-UP

Let me tell you...
... when you're hanging
Out there, on the avenue
Every day, trying to get
Higher, and higher, and
Before you know it, the
Years have flown past and
You still ain't got high
Enough to keep from falling
Down so low until at last
You begin saying to yourself
Man, nothing's left, and
Indeed, a society affirms
Nothing is

NO WONDER PARADISE SEEMS LOST

Time's wearing out
A-sittin' and a-rockin'
Over achievements when
It's perfectly clear
 Hate and fear
A mother's anguish
 Bereavements
Help..! Help ! Help !
 Again, but
Minds cool, mind you
 Vegetating with
Unexploited potential

2. NO WONDER PARADISE SEEMS LOST

Why no doubt
Paradise seems lost
Irretrievably in a
Burst of dawn
 Godalmighty !
Demons keep vying
So and so many today
Every day
 A soul flies
 Unnecessarily
Every day
 A baby cries

Yet folks shout
There is the rainbow
A light on a dark
 Ghetto street
 A naked thigh
But looking away from
 The heavens
What bitter truth
 Morals lax
 Outlook obtuse
And there's not
 Enough love
Being spread about

THE VERDICT

Why it's everywhere...
... old attitudes cringing before
The tribunal of present tense
Being judged patiently and fair
And severely punished when found
Guilty, of greed and social
Malfeasance

Although most plead innocence
All solemnly swear, from the very
Beginning there was violence
And mistrust
Lust !
How it contorts a countenance
Strangling souls of common sense
From dawn to dusk
Nights an eternal concatenation of
Scheming and pretense, and, as
Consequence, increases
Disappointment and disgust

2. THE VERDICT

But at last the entire incidence
Is being considered by an impartial
Mixed jury and, in spite of all
Emotional fury, pure spiritual unity
Will declare, the issue with
Thought intense

The verdict, however, we must
All share

IT'S THE TRUTH

And they came from all around to look at it
And they began to laugh
And how they laughed & laughed & laughed

Then quietly in solemn dignity it looked
About and
Noticing that all of them were laughing
Every single one of them from
Every single point of view were
Laughing and laughing and laughing
It lifted its voice and joined in laughter
With them

Suddenly they cursed and began to observe
Each, one the other from
The corner of an eye

EVERY DAY

Some folk swear it's tough
Being out there on the run
But every day you wake up
Means that every day is won

OH AMSTERDAMMERS ! OH AMSTERDAMMERS !

(e)

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

I have no wish to criticise

and I shall not apologize

but

of all the peoples of Europe

whom I like so much

I have met none more friendly

than the Dutch

Oh Amsterdammers ! Oh Amsterdammers !

Nor with manners

as such